



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SD ARMY NATIONAL GUARD BATTALION WINS REGIONAL SUPPLY AWARD

The U.S. Army announced a South Dakota Army National Guard battalion as a region winner and national runner up in supply excellence awards.

The 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion won the Region VI Supply Excellence Award and was runner up in U.S. Army Chief of Staff of the Army Supply Excellence Award, which recognizes Army units who demonstrate excellence in supply and support operations, property accountability and resource management.

The Pierre-based battalion that provides mission command and supervision for five units with approximately 520 soldiers in seven communities throughout South Dakota was named runner up in the Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, or MTOE, unit category.

The Supply Excellence Award Program was established in 1984 by the Chief of Staff of the Army to recognize excellence in supply operations at various unit and organizational levels. The program's objectives are to enhance logistics readiness of all Army units, enforce the Command Supply Discipline Program and provide a structure for official recognition of group and individual initiatives.

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THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS



SDDVA's Erin Bultje was live on South Dakota Public Broadcasts "In the Moment," this week. Bultje highlighted all the work the Department is doing with incarcerated veterans. Click here to listen to the interview:

<http://listen.sdpb.org/post/voice-south-dakota-veterans-their-families>

South Dakota State University (SDSU) has a great story to share regarding their new "Warrior Wellness program at SDSU. Click here to read or listen to the entire story: <https://www.keloland.com/news/eye-on-keloland/warrior-wellness-at-sdsu/1606795404>

South Dakota's Congressional delegation have invited United States Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Willkie to visit facilities in Hot Springs and consider options to create PTS treatment centers. To learn more about this story, visit:

<https://kelo.com/news/articles/2018/nov/19/delegation-invites-va-secretary-to-hot-spring-va-hospital/>

RECENT RECOGNITIONS

Verne Ellston, originally from Gregory County, now a resident of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home was presented with the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal during a recent ceremony at the State Veterans Home.



Dan Cullen, Fall River County Veterans Service Officer was recently recognized by Sandra Horsman, Director of the VA Black Hills Health Care System.

Tom Johnson, patient advocate for VABHHCS noted "Dan has been an irreplaceable asset to the veterans of South Dakota, as well as our veterans who travel to Hot Springs seeking care. Mr. Cullen works tirelessly with our community members to ensure our "at risk" veterans have champions in the community who can advocate for their care."

Cullen's dedication to veterans has saved lives within the VABHHCS catchment area.





VA REALIGNS SEVERAL PROGRAM OFFICES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) modernization efforts to improve efficiency in care coordination for veterans and meet a presidential executive order for reorganizing the executive branch, the VA plans to realign several programs within its Veterans Health Administration (VHA) into four offices.

A requirement of [Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch](#), the realignment, which will begin Nov. 25, is designed to enhance quality care for veterans by improving coordination of services in the areas of population health; education and training of health care professionals; research, academic affiliations; engineering services; and human resources (HR).

"The realignment creates greater accountability and clearer governance for the program offices that perform these critical functions," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Integrating and consolidating offices will allow the VA to reduce bureaucracy and focus on meeting veterans' needs."

Population Health will consolidate six programs into one new office to reduce administrative burden on the Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs) and hospitals. This consolidation will enable facilities to target issues common to their market area and, based on the populations' health in the region, align with other federal agencies to promote best practices based on public and private institutional standards.

The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) and Office of Research and Development (ORD) will realign under the new Discovery, Education and Affiliates Networks (DEAN) office to foster a collaborative environment that will address the most complex health concerns facing veterans, while improving medical care for all Americans.

On June 22, Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy moved from executive in charge of VHA to oversee the DEAN office. "It is critical that someone of Dr. Clancy's experience take on this new role to help ensure that the next generation of physicians will thrive in providing cutting-edge medical care and innovations for veterans," Wilkie said.

Engineering and Environment of Care functions will be integrated into a single office to improve coordination between related environmental and safety initiatives and provide a world-class health care environment. VA Medical Centers will now have a single point of contact for safety issues. The consolidation of functions also will ensure high-quality safety standards, which are essential to veterans' health.

HR will merge four headquarters-based HR groups with similar functions into one office to create a more efficient HR organization and provide more transparent and consistent service. A more efficiently functioning HR Service in VHA will improve the quality and efficiency of central office functions, which are essential to VA providing high-quality health care to veterans.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 4—Governor's Budget Address—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec 10—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 12—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—Noon (CT)
Dec 13—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—American Legion Post 17—Watertown—Noon (CT)
Dec 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—VFW—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Dec 24-25—State Offices Closed
Dec 31—Jan 1—State Offices Closed
Jan 8—Governor's State of the State—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 13-18—VFW Accredited Service Officer Training—Annapolis, MD
Jan 18—Sioux Falls Military Appreciation Resource Fair—Central Church (Ralph Rogers Road) 10:00 am—9:00 pm (CT)
Jan 28-29—VFW State Legislative Conference—Pierre
Jan 28—VFW State Legislative Reception—Pierre
Feb 2—USS South Dakota Commissioning
Feb 8-10—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish
Mar 3-7—VFW Legislative Conference—Washington, DC
July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL



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